

# Amending the North Carolina Constitution: Spatial and Political Enfranchisement as Portrayed By Delegate Votes and Voter Representation in 1835

By: James C. Burke and [Elisabeth S. Nelson](#)

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## **Abstract:**

The most significant event in the political history of antebellum North Carolina was the convention that assembled at Raleigh on 4 June 1835 to amend the North Carolina Constitution. At that time, it had become apparent that the North Carolina Constitution of 1776 was seriously flawed. When the convention was adjourned on 11 June 1835, the delegates had prepared amendments that abolished borough representation, secured better representation for the western counties, allowed for election of the governor by the people rather than the Legislature, and removed certain religious qualifications for holding office. Unfortunately, they also submitted an abrogation the right of free persons of color to vote. When the amendments were submitted to the citizens of the state for ratification, the tabulation of popular vote reflected a stark contrast between the counties of the east, favoring rejection of the amendments, and the counties of the Piedmont and Mountains that supported their ratification. With such a solid division between the regions, it is difficult to determine county-level sentiment on any particular amendment. The votes of the delegates to the convention, however, were not always so clearly divided along sectional lines when they were crafting the amendments. By mapping the spatial distribution of the votes of the delegates on the individual amendments, county-level attributes of the popular vote emerge.

## **Article:**

### ***Introduction***

This study analyzes the votes of the delegates on several amendments recorded in *Proceedings and Debates of the Convention of North Carolina called to amend The Constitution of the State, which assembled at Raleigh, June 4, 1835* and the *Journal of the Convention, Called by the Freeman of North-Carolina, to Amend the Constitution of the State, Which Assembled in the City of Raleigh, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of June, and Continued in Session Until the 11<sup>th</sup> day of July Thereafter* to determine whether the resulting tabulation of votes on certain amendments suggests voting along sectional interests or other spatial patterns. In addition, we examined the results of the popular vote and compare the number of votes to statistics on the federal population, free white population, and revenue of the counties found in the earlier *Proceeding of a Meeting of Members of the Legislature held in Raleigh, January 11, 1834 with an Address to the People of North Carolina, on the subject of Amending the Constitution of the State*.

The resulting maps show that the votes of the delegates on each of the selected amendments illustrate a more complex distribution of sentiments at the county level on different issues than is commonly assumed. The delegates did, on occasion, vote along sectional lines, but just as often voted in accordance with their county's interest, such as the amendments abolishing borough representation and abrogating the tight of free persons of color to vote. On other amendments, a pattern, including blocks of counties within regions, would appear voting contrary to others in the same region.

The *Vote of the People* appears at glance to be clearly divided east and west, but when the voting totals are compared to the population of the counties within these divisions the vote is less representative of all the people. Voter percentages are dismally small in some counties, and at their maximum, amount to less than 18 percent. This is telling evidence of the low level of political enfranchisement that existed for the general population at this point in the state's history.

### **Historical Background**

Of North Carolina's thirty-five counties in 1776, twenty-nine were in the Coastal Plain. Much of the Piedmont and all Mountains were too sparsely populated to be divided into counties proportional to the size of these regions. The old constitution allowed each county one senator and two representatives in the legislature. Since nearly the entire population of the state was engaged in agriculture, the constitution allowed seven borough towns to send one member to the House of Commons so that commercial interests of the state would be represented. Anticipating expansion into the interior regions of the state, the General Assembly established a permanent capital in Wake County named Raleigh in 1788. As the population of the state grew, large counties in the central and western parts of the state were created, although the smaller counties of the east retained control over the legislature. It had become apparent that the North Carolina Constitution of 1776 was seriously flawed in other respects: the old constitution contained archaic qualifications and restrictions for holding office, and it promoted the interests of slave-owning eastern planters over that of the middling farmer majority. It also presented administrative obstacles to a coherent program of economic development and internal improvements. Yet, early efforts to amend the constitution met with failure. For example, when representatives of the western counties introduced resolutions to amend the constitution in 1821, the eastern majority rejected them. It would take a crisis to galvanize support for reform. The controversy over relocation of the capital to Fayetteville after the State House in Raleigh burnt in 1831 set in motion a successful movement to amend the constitution (Conner, 1908, 3-8).

Intertwined with the need for fair representation, the counties of the Piedmont and Mountains desired road, canals, and railroads. Throughout the 1820s, the need for internal improvements was the greatest source of discord between the eastern and western counties. Sectional differences had hampered the realization of first plan for a state system of canals and turnpikes that was championed by Judge-Archibald Murphey. Legislators from the eastern counties were inclined to relegate the execution of navigational improvements to private companies rather than accept state aid for the projects that would primarily serve their interest. This was motivated by the fear that state aid in the east would lead to state aid in other regions of the state, and the wealthy east would be taxed to pay for improvements in the interior. The politicians of the southwestern counties and mountains, however, gradually organized into a political block with the persistence to attain greater representation, and after the State House fire, they alignment of interests in the southeastern "Cape Fear counties." Westerners were not concerned about the location of the capital, but the friends of the movement to locate the capital to Fayetteville offered to support their efforts to amend the constitution. The legislature continued to meet in Raleigh. During the 1831-32 Session of the General Assembly, the alliance managed to defeat a bill to appropriate funds to rebuild the State House. However, the Cape Fear region was not supportive of the convention bill introduced by their allies, and it was defeated. The reformers managed to arrange an unofficial poll on the subject of a constitutional convention in 1833 that almost succeeded in convincing the General Assembly to pass a convention bill, but it was again defeated. The alliance between the eastern and western counties solidified after the 1833-34 Session of the General Assembly. During the same year, two internal improvements conventions were held in Raleigh. The offshoot of these conventions was a flood of acts during the session to incorporate railroads. However, conservative legislators blocked any recommendations for aid, including funding for surveys. This was particularly frustrating to eastern commercial interests (Jeffrey, 1989, 52-60).

On the evening of 11 January 1834, after the General Assembly rejected the bill for a constitutional convention, Charles Fisher of Rowan County, James Seawell of Fayetteville, and representatives from Anson, Buncombe, Granville, Iredell, Rockingham, Stokes, and Wilkes counties, all favoring the constitutional convention, met to plan their next course of action. The representatives resolved to form an Executive Committee to prepare and

publish essays on amending the constitution of the state. In addition, they planned to publish the bill rejected that day, and to establish committees in the individual counties to distribute the publications and collect contributions to offset costs (North Carolina, 1834c, 3-4). Through the spring and summer of 1834, the supporters of amending the state constitution began distributing pamphlets and holding rallies, pressing the campaign into the eastern counties (Jeffrey, 1989, 62). The fund of a state system of internal improvements is discussed in the *Proceeding of a Meeting of Members of the Legislature, held in Raleigh, January 11, 1834; with an Address to the People of North-Carolina, on the Subject of Amending the Constitution of the State*:

This subject presents a forcible appeal to such among you as *desire* to see the State embark upon a scheme of Internal Improvements. — Were a loan taken by the State, sufficient to commence operations on such a work, the funds must be under the control of a Government whose *necessary* expenses exceed the ordinary revenue of \$15,000 per year, and who does not know, that the system would be a "scapegoat," to the sin of all other expenditures. and become odious? Would the people at large be taught to discriminate when it is notorious that few among you possess or have sought after any knowledge of our finances for many years? Depend upon it, you will never command money for the expenditure, or enterprise to pursue a system of great public works, if you are to rely upon an increase of taxes equal to the present deficiency of revenue for governmental purposes, added to enlarged demand-on it for the interest of a State debt.

Simply stated, the expense of government had increased as new counties were added, yet many of these counties were not contributing enough in taxes to maintain their administration. While a program of internal improvements was necessary for the prosperity of the state, the increasing costs of government would continue to consume tax revenues and reduce available funds in the treasury to finance those improvements. Simply stated, the expense of government had increased as new counties were added, yet many of these counties were not contributing enough in taxes to maintain their administration. While a program of internal improvements was necessary for the prosperity of the state, the increasing costs of government would continue to consume tax revenues and reduce available funds in the treasury to finance those improvements.

The efforts of the reformers contributed momentum to the movement throughout the year of 1834. Governor David L. Swain pressed the subject of a constitutional convention in his message to the General Assembly in 1834, and the convention bill passed on 5 January 1835. When the convention convened on 4 June 1835, its delegates included the most respected men in the state, and each a freeholder of at least one hundred acres from the county they represented. The most notable of these included Governor Swain, Judge William Gaston, and Charles Fisher. Nathaniel Macon, who was chosen to be president of the convention, would perform the last great service of his career (Konkle, 1922, 144-148, 150-152). Macon, at seventy-eight years old, had spent much of his life in Congress and had known the framers of the first North Carolina State Constitution. While his selection as president did not hold special political significance, he was the undisputed authority on the 1776 constitution. Macon, Gaston, and Swain dominated the proceeding of the convention (Lefler and Newsome, 1973, 353-354).

The convention debates reflect the conflict between the two side's visions of North Carolina. Nathaniel Macon clearly supported the cause of education, an issue that was linked to the internal improvement movement. However, he did not believe that North Carolina was a commercial state, and its lack of a good port along with the "sickly" environment of the southeast section placed it in a poor position to compete with other states. Promoting public education would make the citizens of North Carolina virtuous, if not great. Nathaniel Macon took a different approach in some remarks about the degraded condition of the state, noting that North Carolinians were independent and "in general more happy," even though they lacked the more conspicuous trapping of prosperity (North Carolina, 1836, 43, 92). Macon did not want to see the constitution rewritten; he merely wanted amendments appropriate to meet the changed conditions and to satisfy the political and economic demands of the western section of the state. He wanted to see suffrage based on mature judgment rather than property, public education supported by taxation, annual legislatures, the recording of individual votes —*viva voce* — in legislature, religious liberty, and the election of state officers and judges to specific

terms. He was not concerned with commercial fads or internal improvements (Dodd, 1903, 387-389). To a degree, the convention achieved many of these objectives. However, Macon was disappointed that the convention approved biennial sessions.

In the course of the debates, James Wellborn, a delegate from Wilkes County, stated that the disparity between the representation of the eastern and western counties had been responsible for the failure of a system of internal improvements, including both the Central Rail Road and the plan to connect the Cape Fear and Yadkin. Mr. Wilson, of Perquimans, questioned the motives of the west in seeking equal representation. He believed that Mr. Wellborn's statements exposed the desire of the western counties' representatives for railroads and canals to give them an outlet to the ocean. However, the opening of new territory to the south and west would continue to encourage out-migration from the state. <sup>1</sup>A railroad connecting the west to the Atlantic could not reverse conditions. Jesse Speight, of Greene County, remarked that a railroad from the seaboard to the mountains was impossible. The state did not have the capital for such a project, and the profits from transporting produce would not sustain it. Railroads made their money from passenger service. Nevertheless, if the citizens of the east were to be taxed for railroads, they should have a say in how the money was distributed. Mr. Speight stated that a mutual jealousy existed in the state between east and west, and among all the river basins. The only possible way to get the cooperation of the representatives of the opposing sections of the state was to extend political favors. He hoped he could bring before the legislature a plan to build a railroad from Beaufort to New Bern and a railroad from Fayetteville to the western region. He thought these projects were practical (North Carolina, 1836, 86-87, 98-99, 123125).

The subjects of internal improvement and education intersected in the debates on other issues such as borough representation, the number of representatives in the House of Commons, and other administrative considerations of government. Those constitutional changes that altered the nature of representation would indirectly influence the cause of internal improvements. The convention, however, embraced other proposed amendments, such as the removal of religious qualifications for holding office. This provision of the 1776 constitution remained untested, and perhaps ignored. The new amendment changed the qualifications, but excluded non-Christians. The debates devoted to the topic of religious qualification for holding office were of no consequence because such a provision was inconsistent with the Constitution of the United States. Under the new constitution, the composition of the House of Commons consisted of 90 to 120 members, based on population numbers. This gave the western counties fair representation according to their population size. However, the east retained an advantage because three-fifths of its large slave population was included in the total county population in the same way employed by the Federal Government determine representation. The *Federal Number* does not reflect the actual slave population. Three-fifths of the actual slave population was added to the free population to determine the number of seats for the slave states in the House of Representatives in Congress. The Senate of North Carolina, apportioned to the tax value districts, gave the eastern counties additional advantages (Hamilton, 1916, 13-15). Another new amendment to the North Carolina State Constitution abrogated the right of "Free Persons of Color" to vote.

### *North Carolina under the new constitution*

The convention adjourned on 11 July 1835 and the constitution was put to popular vote several months later. The citizens ratified the North Carolina State Constitution of 1835 by a majority of 5,165 votes (26,711 for ratification, 21,606 against). The vote was divided along sectional lines with most easterners voting for rejection (North Carolina, 1836, 400, 425). Contrary to the long accepted view, the movement to amend the constitution involved bipartisan cooperation between the Democrats and the Whigs. The popular election of the governor, as Judge Gaston noted, would stimulate party politics within the electorate. The citizens would lend their support to the party that served the interests of the whole state (Jeffrey, 1989, 64-65). Edward B. Dudley, North Carolina's first popularly elected governor was elected in 1836. He belonged to the Whig Party. This national political party was formed in opposition to the Democratic Party and Andrew Jackson. Its platform supported economic development and internal improvements. The citizens of the state continued to elect Whig governors until 1850. Charles Manly, the last Whig governor, left office in January of 1851. The politics of the

improvement-minded Whig party would shape the railroad movement in North Carolina during its first period of construction.

Edward B. Dudley was a harmonizing force in North Carolina politics. He focused on practical issues rather than partisan concerns, and entertained a liberal viewpoint. Having served in Congress from 1829 to 1831, he refused to run for another term. In 1830, he had published a circular that opposed the Cherokee removal that irritated some in the westernmost section of the state that anticipated the opening of this region to settlement. However, when he ran for governor during 1836, his platform was unambiguous: he favored a bipartisan effort to improve the state, and bring it a condition where it would be economically competitive with its neighbors. His views on internal improvements made him an attractive candidate in the western counties in spite of being an easterner. He possessed a congenial personality, great wealth, and tendency to follow his principals doggedly (Hamilton, 1916, 36; Jeffrey, 1989, 75). Governor Dudley, with the aid of his colleague William Graham, labored to reorganize the finances of the state during the 1836-37 Session of the General Assembly. The central achievement of this session was the two-fifths investment on the part of the state for several railroad projects, including the Cape Fear & Western Rail Road from Fayetteville to the Yadkin River, the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road, and the North Carolina Central Rail Road from Beaufort to Fayetteville (Konkle, 1922, 176). The new statute channeled the distribution of the federal surplus into the stock of the railroad companies and the dividends from the stocks would be applied to the fund for public education called the Literary Fund (North Carolina, 1837b, 346-352).

## **Mapping the Votes**

### ***The Vote of the People***

Culturally, politically, and economically, North Carolina has always been divided into four sections. These sections are the Cape Fear Region, the Northeastern Counties, the Piedmont, and the Mountains. Physically, North Carolina is divided into the Tidewater, Inner Coastal Plain, Piedmont, and Mountains. When a map is produced from the popular vote on the question of ratification or rejection of the amendments, all of the counties of the Coastal Plain and a few bordering Piedmont counties voted to reject ratification, while the rest of the Piedmont counties and all of Mountain counties were in favor (Figure 1). The popular vote was 26,771 for ratification, and 21,606 for rejection (Convention of North Carolina, 1835, 425). However, the percentage of the whites represented in this vote was small (Figure 2).

The map of the final vote of the convention on the question of submitting the new constitution to the people for ratification or rejection, shows that many of the Coastal Plain counties approved the ordinance (North Carolina, 1835, 400; Figure 3). Mapping the federal population using the same regional distributions (physiographic) shows that the federal population increases west of the Coastal Plain (Figure 4). The low number of voters for each county compared to county population reflects the lack of political enfranchisement of the majority. Another important element associated with "The Vote of the People" is that the voting portion of the population in each county is a good representation of the proportion of the whites in the Federal Number. This does not mean that the \_voters represented a cross-section of their community. The total voters comprised only 10.23 percent of the total white population (or 14.36 percent of the total free population).

### ***Borough Representation***

On Wednesday 10 June 1835, the convention took up the question of Borough Representation in the House of Commons. The topic was debated through the next day, (North Carolina, 1835, 13, 18-20; North Carolina, 1836, 32-60). The third resolution of the convention stated:

*Resolved*, That a Committee be appointed to enquire and report whether any, and of any, what amendments are proper to be made to the said Constitution, as to the exclusion in whole, or in part, of Borough Members from the House of Commons.

(North Carolina, 1835, 13)



The delegates voted on striking the whole of the resolution from the word "resolved" after considering a proposal from Alexander Gaston of Hyde County that Edenton, New Bern, and Wilmington should retain borough representation. The vote to strike the whole resolution was defeated by six votes (North Carolina, 1835, 20; Figure 5). The map of the votes illustrates scattered support for retaining Borough Representation in the eastern counties, and even some support in the west. However, the resolution does not appear to have evoked strong sectional resistance.

### *Religious Qualification Amendment*

A proposed amendment to *Section 32* of the North Carolina Constitution of 1776 intended to remove or alter the religious qualifications for office holding was intensely debated during the NC Constitutional Convention of 1835. Though the religious qualification had been in place since 1776, it had never been used to prevent anyone from holding office.

That no person who shall deny the being of God, or the truth of the *Protestant* Religion, or the divine authority either of the Old or New Testament, or who shall hold Religious principles incompatible with the freedom and safety of the State, shall be capable of holding any office or place of trust or profit in the, Civil department within the State.

(North Carolina, 1836, 416)

The State had never put in place a tribunal to determine the faith of anyone seeking office. Further, Judge William Gaston, the most respected member of the delegates next to Nathaniel Macon, was a Roman Catholic. Nathaniel Macon (1758-1837), the president of the convention, a proponent the anti-Federalism, and a protégé of Willie Jones, the political mind behind the North Carolina Constitution of 1776, stood in opposition to the religious qualification. Macon had stated early in the debate on this issue that "Politics and Religion was the very essence of hypocrisy," and that non-Christians should not be barred from holding office if they have the qualifications (Dodd, 1903, 387390; North Carolina, 1836, 246). Yet, in spite of that fact, the debate on amending it was one of the longest of the convention — 119 pages of the *Proceedings*. The resulting vote was 74 to 51 in favor of the change (Figure 6). This was the vote on the final wording of the proposed amendment, the delegates having voted on several versions of the amendment. The majority agreed on a version that favored the Christian faith.

Insomuch as the delegates labored long for the right wording, and the present North Carolina Constitution of 1971 retains the phrase "any person who shall deny the being of Almighty God," the whole is rendered moot by Article VI of the United States Constitution. To discern a political object on the part of the proponents, then and now, other than making a statement, is difficult.

### *Disenfranchisement of Freedmen*

The distribution of the votes of the delegates on the amendment that removed the right of free persons of color to vote varied from region to region. The delegates of the counties in the north and northeast tended to support it, whereas the delegates from most of the Cape Fear and Piedmont did not. The counties having a split vote between delegates were spread across regions (Figure 7). As William Gaston noted in the debates, the amendment was not aimed at granting a right, but taking one away. It would be particularly unjust to take away this right from a person "who possessed a freehold; was an honest man, and a Christian." He felt that allowing free person of color a voice in political life would foster their loyalty to state (North Carolina, 1836, 79).

### *Ballot or Voice Voting*

The vote of the delegates on the resolution for the amendment on requiring the member of the General Assembly to vote *viva voce* rather than by ballot when electing officers was adopted 84 to 40. The change allowed the votes of each member, yea or nay, to be entered into the record. In this way, the constituents of the members would know how their representatives voted. Nathaniel Macon did not think there was much difference between voting by ballot or *viva voce*, but he preferred the latter. Regardless, he did not think the government or human nature was as dishonest as often represented, and any representative should be open

about the way he voted. William Gaston thought otherwise, stating that representatives would vote along party lines if their votes were recorded. The majority approved the resolution (North Carolina, 1836, 179-. 181). The vote of the delegates was split for most counties throughout the state, with only one delegate voting in a number of counties (Figure 8).

### ***Amendment On Biennial Elections***

The vote of the delegates on the resolution for the amendment on biennial elections passed 85 to 35. This change to the constitution removed the need for annual elections, and was a matter of economy and convenience. Several of the delegates debated against the change vigorously on the grounds that biennial sessions of the General Assembly would deprive the people of the opportunity of the "redress of grievances and strengthening their laws." Others, such as Charles Fisher of Rowan County, thought the people would gain by biennial elections because their selection of representatives would be more informed, and would not adopt the attitude that unfavorable results could be undone in following year's election (North Carolina, 1836, 184-201). The distribution of the delegate's votes shows firm resistance in the northeast (Figure 9).

### ***Gubernatorial Elections***

The resolution on the amendment allowing for the election of the governor by popular vote, as with the members of the House of Commons, passed 74 to 44. Nathaniel Macon did not think that there was a difference between an election of the governor by the General Assembly or by popular vote. As he noted, the governor of North Carolina had little power, and "next to nothing to do." Had the state granted the office of governor greater authority as was the case in other states, the governor might exercise undue power over legislation. However, the benefit of public election to the post would negate the practice of legislators working to put their friends into the position. Mr. Gaston stated that the election of the governor by popular vote would lead to the "General Ticket system," or party politics, because the organization required a statewide campaign for the office (North Carolina, 1836, 335-339). This had not been the situation with politics in North Carolina up to that time. With the single exception of the presidential elections, the voters aligned themselves with parties organized under regional and county committees.

The distribution of the votes of the delegates on this resolution show some resistance to the change in the northeast and northeastern Tidewater, but the delegates from the Cape Fear, Piedmont, and Western counties supported the change. Iredell County appears to be the only county to the west that rejected the resolution. Edgecombe, Sampson, and Wayne counties are the only contiguous counties where a single delegate voted yea and the other abstained. Orange County delegates voted likewise (Figure 10).

### ***Conclusions***

Without the constitutional reforms put in place during the North Carolina State Constitutional Convention of 1835, it is unlikely that railroad development would have progressed during the late 1830s. The failure of earlier railroad schemes and the inability of the General Assembly to adopt a state plan for internal improvements are strongly associated with the undemocratic nature of North Carolina politics under the North Carolina Constitution of 1776. The amendments to the constitution allowed for the development of political parties along the national model, the election of the governor by popular vote rather than by the legislature, and diminished the sectional nature of North Carolina politics. Internal improvement became central to future policy in this environment. However, the abrogation of the vote for free persons of color was a setback in the political progress that exemplifies other aspects of the new constitution. The number of free persons of color in antebellum North Carolina was small, and did not represent a serious threat to the hegemony of the state's ruling classes. It can be attributed to the paranoia that spread through the South following the slave insurrections led by freed blacks such as Nat Turner and Denmark Vesey, and the growing antislavery movement in the North along with the publications of its journalists Benjamin, Lundy, William Lloyd Garrison, and David Walker, a North Carolina native (Freehling, 1966, 49-52).

Mapping the votes of the delegates shows the 'complex underpinning of the seemly monolithic popular vote. The delegates from the counties of the Coastal Plain were often divided on various amendments: the delegates

from Cape Fear counties often aligned with those in the Piedmont and Mountains, as did the counties of the northern Tidewater with the Piedmont. On certain amendments, the vote in opposition or in favor was concentrated in the Piedmont and Mountains. While it is difficult to address all the causes of the diverse voting patterns of the delegates, it should be apparent that rigid sectionalism did not influence the votes of the delegates as so often is assumed. We must look to other cultural and economic intersection factors for the counties — such as transportation, cash crops, educational advantages, the distribution of religious organizations, the cultural origin of a county's original settlers — to approach determining any causal relationships for the votes of the delegates. However, it is clear that the delegate's votes reflect a state wide desire for constitutional reform with one or more amendments, even though some delegates and the residents of their counties rejected the whole package of amendments.

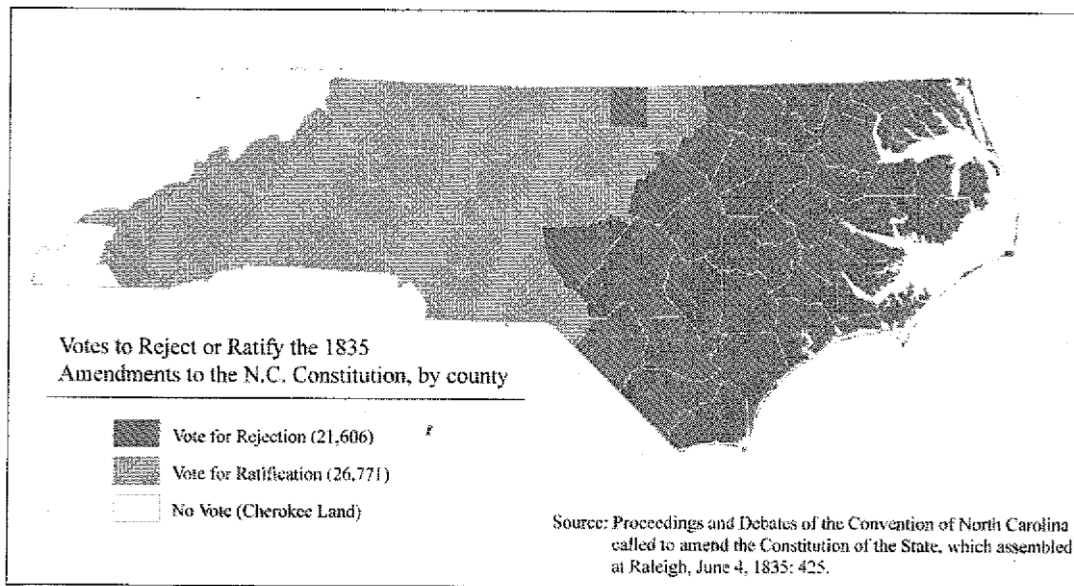


Figure 1. The popular vote to ratify or reject the North Carolina State Constitution of 1835 was close, 26,771 to 21,606. The Western counties and most of the Piedmont counties voted to ratify. The entire Coastal Plain region voted to reject. The Cherokee Lands were not represented at the convention.

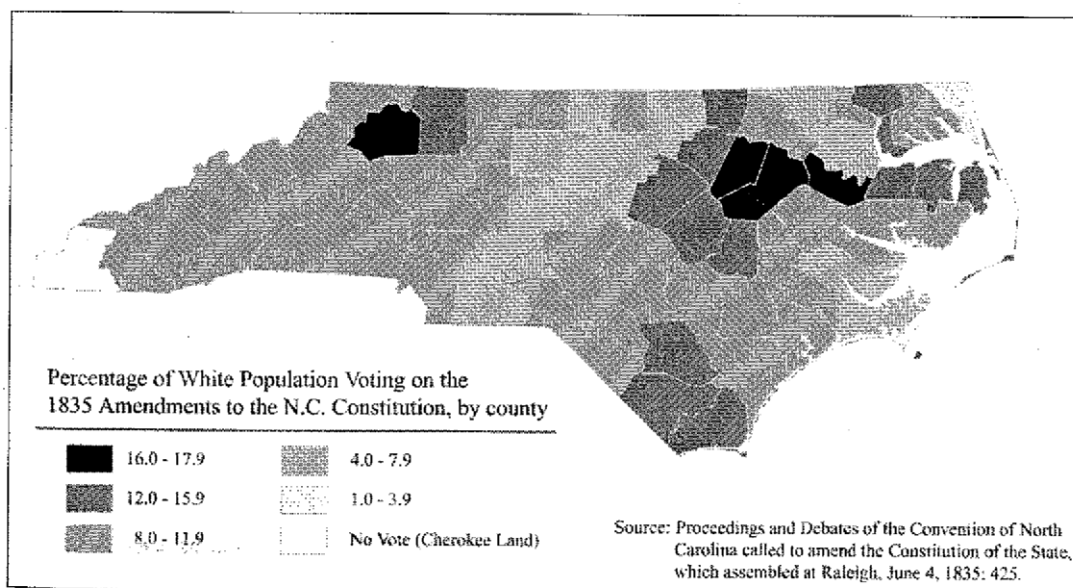


Figure 2. Voter participation by the White population in each county participating in the vote to ratify or reject was small.



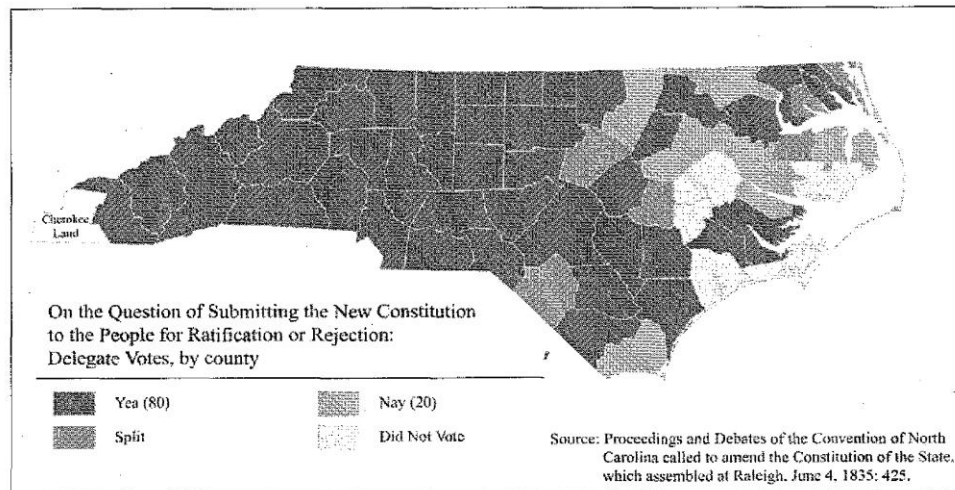


Figure 3. The delegates to the North Carolina Constitutional Convention of 1835 voted to submit the new constitution to the citizens of the state for ratification or rejection. This map shows the distribution of the votes of the delegates. While the vote was unanimously in favor of this action in the western counties, the delegates of the eastern counties were divided.

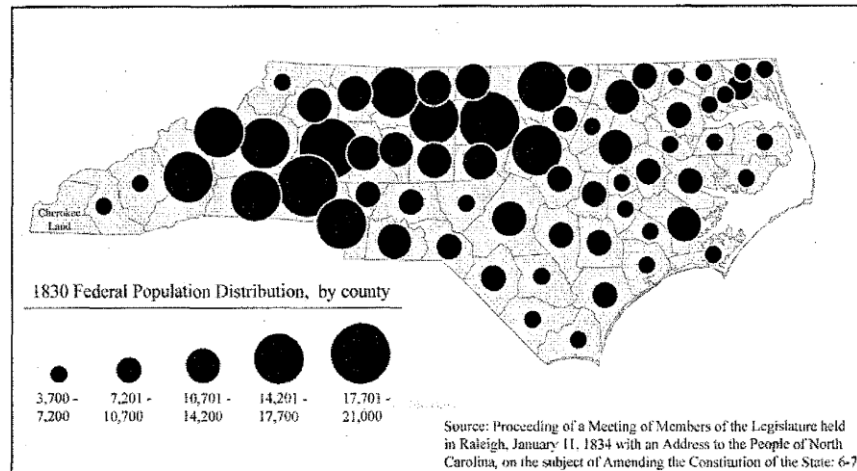


Figure 4. The federal population from the 1830 US Census increases to the west of the fall line. Yancey County, though not formed in 1840, is an estimate based on the population of the surrounding counties.

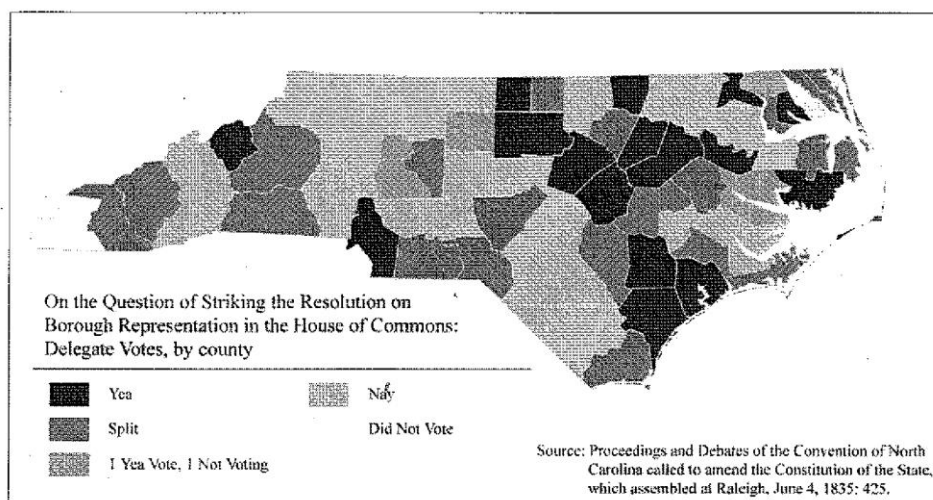


Figure 5. The vote on the question to strike down the resolution abolishing Borough Representation in the House of Commons.

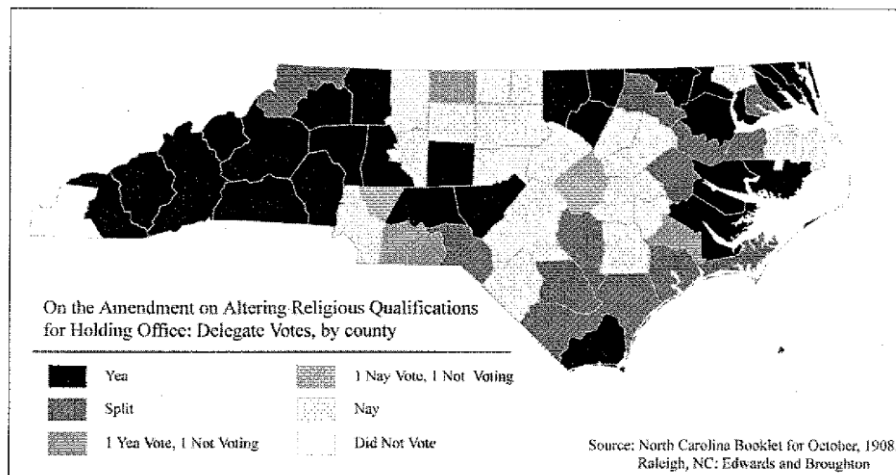


Figure 6. The distribution of votes on amending the religious qualifications for holding office. The vote was 74 in favor, and 51 against the amendment. Some delegates voting against the amendment were opposed to any religious qualifications (Conner, 1908, 21).

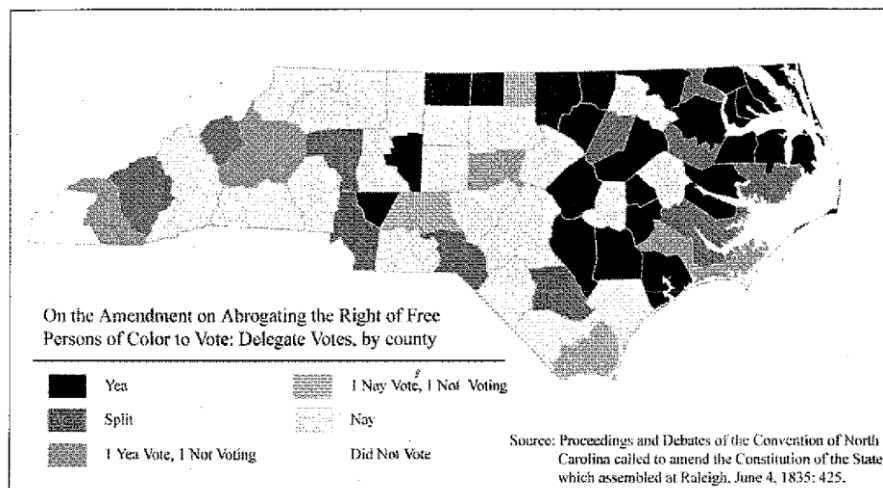


Figure 7. The vote on the amendment abrogating the voting rights of free persons of color. The vote was very close, 66 to 61 in favor of submitting the amendment to popular vote.

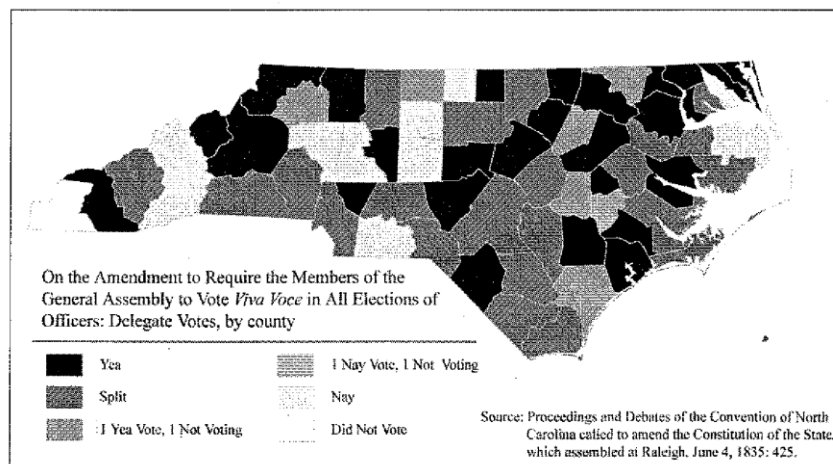


Figure 8. The vote on the resolution for the amendment requiring the General Assembly to vote.

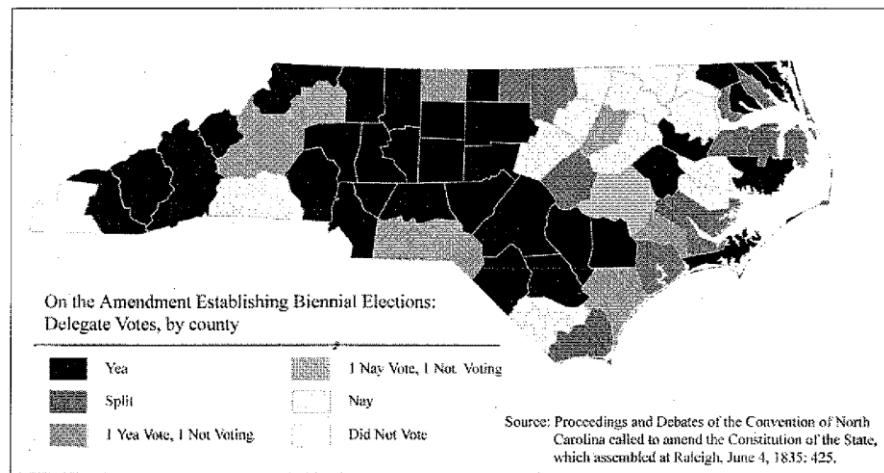


Figure 9. The vote on the resolution for the amendment providing for biennial elections was supported by a majority of the delegates across the state's diverse regions. However, a block of delegates representing northeastern counties rejected the resolution.

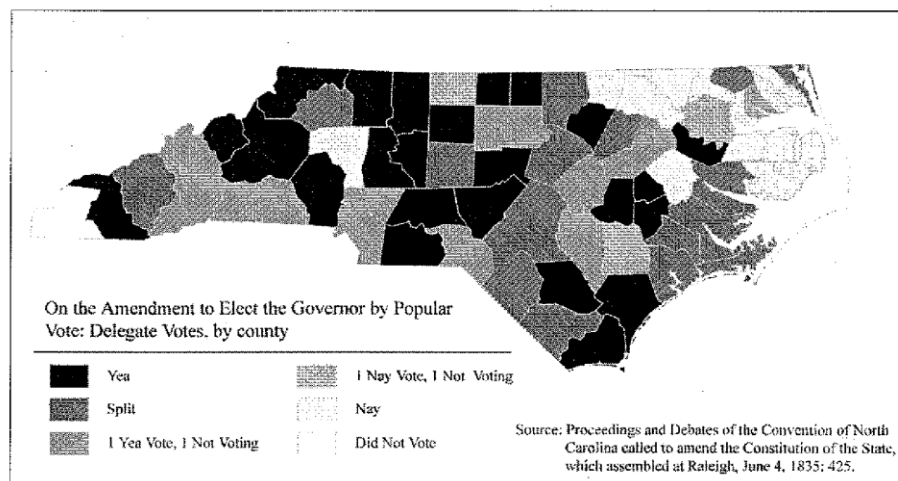


Figure 10. The resolution to amend the constitution to provide for the election of the governor by popular vote passed 74 to 44. Delegates in the northeastern counties as well as those in the northern Tidewater resisted the change. As with other votes, the votes were split for many counties.

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